

IOWA AMERICORPS MEMBERS SERVE ONE MILLION HOURS

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DES MOINES - The Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service is pleased to announce a major milestone for national service. Iowa AmeriCorps members have officially broken the one-million-hour mark for direct service to the state, as measured since 2000, when such records were first kept.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) contributed significantly to this achievement. Members in the department's AmeriCorps Keepers of the Land program logged 235,679 service hours over the last five years.

"Our members are dedicated and provide great service to the DNR and the state of Iowa," said program director Linda Terry. "They're out there pursuing their passions and leaving an environmental legacy for future Iowans."

The DNR first employed AmeriCorps members on a widespread scale in 1999, when officials created the Keepers of the Land volunteer program. Today, the department draws on the talents of 47 members, an increase of nearly four times the number of original members.

"Volunteering is a core value of our close-knit communities and a key to keeping Iowa strong and secure," said Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack. "Iowans who commit to service contribute significantly to our quality of life. They provide countless opportunities for those wanting good-paying jobs, they provide health security for our most vulnerable, and they help uphold Iowa's responsibility of making sure that children grow up with a solid educational background."

Iowa AmeriCorps members have contributed more than \$17 million worth of service to the state since 2000 based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Independent Sector Coalition's estimates of the value of volunteer service.

The national AmeriCorps program was established in 1994 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. In exchange for one year of service, AmeriCorps members receive an education award. Since 1994, more than 2,700 Iowa residents have qualified for more than \$9.5 million in stipends for higher education.

For more information on AmeriCorps, visit www.volunteeriowa.org, or call 1-800-308-5987.